



I WILL
STAND

Daniel was able to stand. Everything about his environment, culture, and circumstances screamed for him to sit down... to conform... to sell-out. But he didn't. Despite insurmountable pressure, he declared with conviction 'I Will Stand.' Now, his story... his example... and his life are both compelling and convicting for us today.

In a world that is in such desperate need to see God... to hear God... to know God, how might we live as tangible expressions of who God is, today? Rather than being known for what we stand against, how might we help others see how amazing God is by our ability to say 'I Will Stand.'

-Michael Davis

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USING THIS GUIDE:

Group Leader Instructions

Before The Group Meeting:

1. Spend some time in prayer before your group.
2. As you prepare for the study, read over the questions and think through how answering them for yourself could help you better walk with God.
3. Then, try developing two to three practical steps that would help members of your group also walk better with God. Avoid the temptation to simply recount information, but thoughtfully arm your group members with something tangible that they can do throughout the week.
4. In the closing moments of your preparation, ask the Lord to move mightily in your home or group setting. Without the Holy Spirit, we can do nothing, and we are utterly dependent upon Him showing up!

During The Group Meeting:

1. Begin with prayer. Ask for the Spirit to be present during the group.
2. Attempt to summarize this week's message, in a few, succinct, thoughts. (See summary below for an example)
3. Assign readers to read various Scripture texts (When applicable).
4. Walk your group through the discussion questions. (Don't feel like you have to cover every question. Some questions will naturally be more relevant to your group than others, and will naturally produce more fruitful discussion. Be sensitive to the flow of conversation and either redirect or dwell longer upon a topic when it is necessary).
5. In response to questions, share stories and personal examples of how this has played out in your life. What did you learn? How did it help you walk with God? What fresh stories of God's power, love, mercy, or grace do you now have because you trusted Him?
6. Draw others out to share their own personal stories. What did they learn? What would life look like if they were able to live out this week's truth consistently?
7. End in a time of prayer, thanking God for the truths that He has revealed, and for the people that He has brought to your group.

WEEK 2

I WILL STAND EVEN WHEN IT IS HARD

Series Purpose:

Anyone can stand **AGAINST** something. In fact, many people see Christians as people who literally stand against everything! But, our hope in this series is not that people would see what we stand against, but to see whom we are standing **FOR!** It is our hope that God would use us to do immeasurably more in this land and that when we stand, others would see the God that we are standing for.

Sermon Summary:

In today's sermon, we looked at how incredibly difficult it would have been for Daniel and his companions to live in Babylon. They would have been trained in the occult, forced to eat food sacrificed to idols, and even had their names changed to reflect allegiance to these demonic gods. If that were not bad enough, they may have even been castrated in order to protect the king's assets.

Now, as senseless as this may seem, it actually was the means by which God showcased His power to a pagan king. Also, it was the way God strengthened Daniel for the work He had for him. This tells us God will sometimes allow suffering in order to reveal Himself to others and so that we may be strengthened in the process.

This occurred in Daniel's life when he took a stand against eating the king's food, which clearly had been sacrificed to idols. By taking that stand, he was able to remain true to the Jewish dietary laws while also allowing the king to see God in the midst of that trial.

Today, we can also take a stand when times get hard, knowing that God will use us to show the world more of Him while also growing our faith through it's testing. To do that, God first became a man and stood for us through some of the most horrific circumstances imaginable. By so doing, Jesus Christ is now fully capable of giving us His grace so that we too can stand for God in front of an on looking world.

Quotes To Consider:

1. "It's hard to tell if something is counterfeit or the real deal without first putting it to the test. And that's why our faith has to be tested. There's no other way to know the difference between the genuine and the bogus." **Larry Osborne – Thriving In Babylon**

Verses For Reflection:

1. **Daniel 1:4-7:** ⁸But Daniel was determined not to defile himself by eating the food and wine given to them by the king. He asked the chief of staff for permission not to eat these unacceptable foods. ⁹Now God had given the chief of staff both respect and affection for Daniel. ¹⁰But he responded, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has ordered that you eat this food and wine. If you become pale and thin compared to the other youths your age, I am afraid the king will have me beheaded." ¹¹Daniel spoke with the attendant who had been appointed by the chief of staff to look after Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. ¹²"Please test us for ten days on a diet of vegetables and water," Daniel said. ¹³"At the end of the ten days, see how we look compared to the other young men who are eating the king's food. Then make your decision in light of what you see." ¹⁴The attendant agreed to Daniel's suggestion and tested them for ten days. ¹⁵At the end of the ten days, Daniel and his three friends looked healthier and better nourished than the young men who had been eating the food assigned by the king. ¹⁶So after that, the attendant fed them only vegetables instead of the food and wine provided for the others. ¹⁷God gave these four young men an unusual aptitude for understanding every aspect of literature and wisdom. And God gave Daniel the special ability to interpret the meanings of visions and dreams.
2. **Hebrews 4:14-16** – "Since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe. This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most."

Discussion Questions:

1. As you consider some of the hard things you have gone through, how have you been able to see God's faithfulness?
2. How has God used your pain or discomfort to show Himself to others?
3. How could you suffer better so that others could see God in the midst of your trials?
4. What has a recent trial or hardship taught you about yourself? How has that knowledge helped you moving forward?
5. Much of the results we gain are from a talent, effort, or circumstance that we could control. Are there things in your life that can only be explained by God?
6. How do you think you could put yourself in those situations more often?
7. Are there certain areas of your life where God is challenging you to make a stand?

Possible Prayer Topics:

- Prayers for endurance when we face various trials.
- Prayers for wisdom on knowing when and how to stand for God.
- Prayers for the people who will get to see us stand for God; that they would see God's power working through us.
- That our pain and suffering would also teach us about ourselves and the areas we still need to surrender to God.